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THE WITCH OF WAPPING

OR

An Exact and Perfect Relation, of the Life and Devilish Practises of Joan Peterson, who dwelt in *Spruce Island*, near *Wapping*; Who was condemned for practising Witch-craft, and sentenced to be Hanged at *Tyburn*, on *Munday* the 11½th. of *April*, 1652.

Shewing,

How she Bewitch'd a Child, and rock'd the Cradle in the likenesse of a Cat; how she frighted a Baker; and how the Devil often came to suck her, sometimes in the likeness of a Dog, and at other times like a Squirrel.

Together,

With the Confession of *Prudence Lee*, who was burnt in *Smithfield* on *Saturday* the 10th. of this instant for the murthering her Husband; and her Admonition and Counsel to all her Sex in general.

London, Printed for T. W. SPRING. 1652.

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THE

WITCH of WAPPING

MAny are of opinion, that there are no Witches, but let them read in *Leviticus*, and they ſhall find that in the time of *Moſes* there were Magitians and Sorcerers; and that *Saul* went to the Witch of Endor: This is enough to confirm that there were Witches in the nonage of the world; and that this latter Age hath produced ſuch creatures, this following Relation will ſufficiently teſtifie; wherein is fully related the Life and Practiſes of one *Joan Peterſon*, who lived in Spruce Iſland, near Shadwel, all which was proved againſt her at the Seſſions holden at the Old Baily on Wedneſday *Apr.*7.1652.

There are two ſorts oi Witches, which the Vulgar people diſtinguiſh by the names of the Good Witch, (I wonder how that can be,) and the Bad; by reaſon, when one bewitcheth a party, the other unwitcheth him again: Now this *Joan Peterſon*, it ſhould ſeem, was both; for as it was clearly proved, that ſhe had done much miſchief, ſo there were divers that came to witneſſe that ſhe had cured them of ſeveral diſeaſes, amongſt the reſt I heard one of them ſay, that he had been ſo grievouſly troubled with the Head-

ache, that he could take no reſt for 5 Weeks together, and that he had made tryal of many Doctors, but could have no redreſs, and comming to *Peterſon*, ſhe gave him a Drink, which after he had drunk of thrice, he was as well as ever he was; I demanded of him if the Drink did purge him, and ſo removed the humours, and he anſwered, it did not purge him at all; which ſeemed very ſtrange to me, the man being ſo grievouſly tormented with that intolerable pain.

Alſo there was a Cow-keepers Wife, that had one of her Cows lay in ſuch a condition, that ſhe and all that ſaw the Cow did verily perſwade themſelves that it was bewitched; whereupon ſhe came to this *Peterſon*, and promiſed her a reward, if ſhe would cure her Cow: She deſired the woman to ſave her water, and bring it to her, which ſhe did; then taking the water, ſhee ſet it on the fire, and it had not been on long, but the water roſe up in bubbles, in one of the which ſhe ſhewed her the face of the woman which the Cow-keepers wife ſuſpected to have bewitched it, and ſo preſcribing what ſhe ſhould do to recover it, ſhe took her leave; divers other things of this nature, and ſeverall cures ſhe hath performed, but whether they were done in Gods name, or whether ſhe uſed unlawfull means, I ſhall leave that to the charitable reader to judge of, my ſelf deſiring to wave my judgement herein.

Now concerning her evil actions I ſhall relate only ſuch as were clearly proved againſt her, by very credible witneſſes at the Old-Bayly on the 7 of *April*, and for which ſhe was condemned to die, *viz.* One *Chriſtopher Wilſon* being very ſick and weak came to this *Peterſon* and agreed with her for a certain ſum of money to cure him, which ſhe undertook to do, and in a ſhort time cured him, but demanding her money of him, he denied to pay her ſo much as they had agreed for, whereupon ſhe burſt out into theſe ſpeeches;

ches; *you had been better you had given me my money for you ſhall be ten times worſe then ever you were*; and very ſuddenly after he fell into very ſtrange fits, and for twelve hours together would rage and rave like a mad man, and afterwards for twelve hours more would ſlabber out his tongue, and walk up and down like a meer changeling; in this condition he remained certain days, and then he fell very ſick, and at this inſtant (if he be not dead) languiſheth away, and rots as he lies.

Alſo there was one of her neighbours, who had a young child, which was very ſtrangely tormented, having ſuch ſtrange fits that the like was never known and had continued certain days in that condition to the great grief of the Parents, and the admiration of all thoſe that beheld it, and it was brought ſo low, that they expected every hour when it ſhould depart the world, and the Parents were forced to procure one or other every night to watch with it, whereupon two women that were neighbours, deſired that they might watch with it, which was very thankfully accepted of; about midnight they eſpied (to their thinking) a great black cat come to the cradles ſide, and rock the cradle, whereupon one of the women took up the fire-fork to ſtrike at it, and it immediately vaniſhed, about an hour after the cat came again to the cradle ſide, whereupon the other woman kicked at it, but it preſently vaniſhed, and that leg that ſhe kicked with, began to

ſwell and be very ſore, whereupon they were both afraid, and calling up the maſter of the houſe, took their leave; as they were going to their own homes they met a Baker, who was likewiſe a neighbours ſervant, who told them that he ſaw a great black cat that had ſo frighted him, that his hair ſtood an end, whereupon the women told him what they had ſeen, who ſaid he thought in his conſcience that Peterſon had bewitched the aforeſaid child, for (qd. the Baker) I met the witch a litle before going down the Iſland: the Baker witneſſing of this which is formerly related, was demanded whether he had not at other times as well as that been afraid of a cat, who anſwered no, and that he never ſaw ſuch a cat before, and hoped in God he ſhould never ſee the like again.

There was one likewiſe who had been a Maid-ſervant to the foreſaid Peterſon, *witneſſed that one night lying with her Miſtreſſe, being in bed ſhe told her that a Squirrel would come to her, but wiſhed her not to be afraid, for it ſhould do her no harm, and accordingly about midnight there came a Squirrel (or a Eaxiliar in that likeneſſe) and went over the wench to* Peterſon, *which ſo affrighted her that ſhe lay as if ſhe were in a trance; and ſhe further affirmeth, that her Miſtreſſe and it talkt together a great part of the night; but being demanded what they diſcourſed on, ſhe replied, that ſhe heard her conference very perfectly, but ſhe was ſo bewitched by it, that ſhe could not remember one word. Alſo her ſon (a boy of about 7 or 8 years of age) being askt by ſome of his School-fellows how his mother could do ſuch ſtrange things, he ſaid,*

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that she had a Squirrel that taught her what she should do. Moreover it was affirmed by a man that lived by her, that sitting by the fire side late one evening talking with her, on a sudden Peterson *shrieked and cried out, who asking her what she ailed, she said do you see nothing? not I replied the other, look where it comes, saith she, and then he perceived as it were a black dog, who went directly to* Peterson, *and put his head under her arm-pits, whereat the man was so astonished, that he ran out of the house as if he had been frighted out of his wits. These and other strange things being proved against her, she was condemn'd to be hanged at Tyborn on Munday the* 12 *of* April, 1652.

On Saturday the 10 of this instant April, one Prudence Lee, was burned in Smithfield for murthering of Philip Lee her husband, who was a Bailiff, and lived in Bell-Alley in Golding-Lane. She came from Newgate to Smithfield on foot, between two of the Sheriffs Officers, attired in a Red Wastecoat; and being brought to the Stake, and death presenting himself before her, she confessed as followeth.

That she had been a very lewd liver, and much given to cursing and swearing, for which the Lord being offended with her, had suffered her to be brought to that untimely end, she further confessed that being jealous of her husband, and some unfitting words passing between them, in her passion she stabbed him, for which she earnestly prayed to the

Lord

Lord that he would forgive both that and all her other grievous ſins, deſiring that as ſhe was a Preſident, ſo ſhe might be a warning to all women, that they attempt to do nothing raſhly, eſpecially againſt their husbands. Then the Executioner ſetting her in a pitch barrel, bound her to the ſtake, and placed the ſtraw and Faggots about her; whereupon ſhe lifting up her eys towards Heaven, deſired all that were preſent to pray for her; and the Executioner putting fire to the ſtraw, ſhe cried out; Lord Jeſus have mercy on my ſoul; and after the fire was kindled ſhe was heard to ſhrike out terribly ſome five or ſix ſeveral times.

It is reported that her husband was a very wicked liver, and that he kept company with ſtrange women; and that when ſhe committed this abhominable murther, ſhe found him in company with another woman, at the ſign of the Laſt, an Ale-houſe in Rotten-Row in Old-ſtreet; which occaſioned very evil language to paſs between them; upon which ſhe drew her knife and ſtab'd him.

FINIS.

A DECLARATION IN Answer to several lying Pamphlets concerning the Witch of WAPPING.

BEING

A more perfect Relation of the Arraignment, Condemnation, and Suffering of Jone Peterson, who was put to death on Munday the 12 of *April*, 1652.

SHEWING

The Bloudy Plot and wicked Conspiracy of one *Abraham Vandenbemde*, *Thomas Crompton*, *Thomas Collet*, and others.

LONDON:
Printed in the Year, 1652.

A Declaration, In answer to severall lying Pamphlets concerning the witch of Wappin.

THe said *Abraham Vandenbemde* with other the said confederates (having laid a Plot to take away the life of Mrs. *Anne Levingston*, because the Lady *Powel* had given her an estate which some of them expected) in *December* last repaired to one *Jone Simpson*, and proffered her 10 *l.* in hand, and 500 *l.* more in Hillary term following, if she would swear that Mrs. *Levingston* had used sorcery & witchcraft to take away the Lady *Powels* life. And on the 10 of *Jan.* then following, one *Anne Hook* (who pretends her self to be a cunning woman) being imployed by the said confederates, did perswade her thereunto, offering her six score pounds, and half the money which the said *Vandenbemde* and the said *Crompton* were to give her and her husband for making their Affidavits, if she would do the like. But the said *Simpson* abhominating so wicked a practice, to take away an innocent Gentlewomans life, discovered the Plot; for which conspiracies of the said confederates, a speciall Supplicavit was granted out of Chancery, to bind them to the good behaviour

viour, and other legal prosecutions are still depending against them. But the said confederates not resting there (in further prosecution of the Plot) did imploy the aforesaid *Hook*, to procure witnesses to swear what they desired: who accordingly about *January* last came to the above-named *Jone Peterson*, at her house in Spruce Island near Wapping, and there made offer of 100*l.* to her, to swear, that the said Mrs. *Levingston* had received from her (the said *Peterson*) certain powders, and bags of seeds, to help her in her law suits, and to provoke unlawfull love (as the said *Jone Peterson* did affirm before her triall.) But she refusing to do the same, the said confederates to prevent the punishment, which justly and vnavoidably must have befallen them, in case the said *Peterson* should have revealed this their practice, as *Simpson* (before) had done the other, they lay a new design, to anticipate the same, as followeth.

On the 7th of *March* last, the said confederates came to Wapping, and got a warrant from one Mr. *Waterton* a Justice of the Peace, to apprehend the said *Petersons* person, and to search her house for Images of Clay, Hair, & Nails, which accordingly they did; but upon strict search and diligent inquiry could find no such thing; whereupon the said confederates carried her before the said Justice, to have her examined where the said *Vandenbemde*, *Collet* (their Sollicitour) and two or three other persons whom they brought with them, sate at the table as the Justices Clerks to take her examination, where the said Justice examined the said *Peterson* upon oath (contrary to law) concerning her using of witchcraft and sorcery to take away the life of the Lady *Powel* of *Chelsey*. To which she answered, that she never used sorcery or Witch-craft, neither had she ever heard of the Lady *Powel*, saving that not long before one *Anne Hook*

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(an Iriſh woman) came to her with one Goodwife *Garland* to have perſwaded her to have made ſuch an oath againſt Mrs. *Levingſton*, as ſhe the ſaid *Hook* her ſelf before had done, as the ſaid *Jone Peterſon* likewiſe did affirm before her death. Whereupon the ſaid Iuſtice (contrary to law) gave order to ſearch her, which was done; but the ſearchers could find nothing on her body which might create the leaſt ſuſpition in them of her being a witch; whereupon the ſaid Juſtice took bayl for her appearance at the next Seſſions. And on the 14 of *March* following (being the Sabboth day) was by the ſaid confederates means, again apprehended, and examined a new, about the ſaid Lady *Powels* death. And the Argument whichthey then made uſe of to perſwade the ſaid *Peterſon* to confeſs, was, that ſhe needed not fear what ſhe confeſſed, for it was not her life they aimed at, but to have matter whereby to accuſe one Mrs. *Levingſton*, who had gotten the ſaid Lady *Powels* eſtate, and thereby had undone 36 Perſons of the ſaid Ladyes Kindred: And then told her, that they were ſhortly to queſtion the ſaid Mrs. *Levingſtone* for the ſame, either in the *Parliament* houſe, or before a Committee (as the ſaid *Jone Peterſon* did likewiſe affirme before her death.) Whereunto the ſaid *Jone Peterſon* replyed, that ſhe never knew, nor heard of the ſaid Lady *Powell*, otherwiſe as aforeſaid; And that ſhe had not heard from the ſaid Mrs. *Levingſtone* for a bove a yeare before that time: Then they cauſed her (contrary to Law) to be ſearched againe in a moſt unnaturall & Barbarous manner, by fower women whom they themſelves for that purpoſe had brought along with them, on of which women told the Juſtice that there was a Teat * of fleſh in her ſecret parts more then other women uſually had, whereupon the ſaid Juſtice committed her firſt to New-priſon and

* *Note that this Teat upon the view of the Phyſitians was the day before her*

and from thence to Newgate, where she was left to the ordering and mercy of one *Brooks*, a Keeper there, and an Agent of the said confederates.

On Munday the 5th. of *April* instant, two Bills of indictment were preferred against her at Hicks-hall, * and found by the Grand-Jury, upon which indictments upon the 6th. of *April*, she was arraigned before Mr. Recorder (who is of Councel for the conspirators,) and on the 7 of *Apr.* she was tried; at which triall the said confederates (who before had spent three weeks time at *Wapping* in procuring witnesses) were present, with three Councellors to prosecute the said *Peterson*. Then the Court proceeded upon the first indictment, which was for bewitching the Lady *Powel* to death; whereupon many women persons of mean degree (and of ill fame and reputation) were produced against her, and interrogated by the said Councel, according to the Briefs delivered unto them, wherein were all the witnesses testimonies, written before hand. And being asked what she had to say for her self? (upon her knees) she took God to witnesse that she never knew the Lady *Powel* nor the house where she dwelt, nor was any wise guilty of her death; and delivered a paper of such witnesses as she had to defend her, desiring that they might be called, whereupon Dr. *Bates*, and Dr. *Colledon* Physitians, together with Mr. *Stamford*, and Mr. *Page* Chyrurgians

her death found to be natural & lesse then in many other women, & the said Physitians also affirmed that she was then quick with child.

* *Note, That* Sir Jo. Danvers, *Mr.* Snape, *Mr.* Winstanley, *and Mrs* Waterton *Justice. of the Peace were with the confederates at a Tavern near Hicks-hall, consulting when the Bill of Indictment was preparing, and that* Sir John Danvers *came and dined at the Sessions house and had much private discourse with the Recorder and many of the Justices and came and sate upon the Bench at her Trial, where he hath seldome or never been for these many years.*

rurgians, and divers other persons of good quality, testified the disease, manner of sickness, and the cause of the said Ladies death, which were the Dropsie, the Scurvey, and the yellow Jaundies, and that they wondred how she was able to live so long, having most of those diseases growing on her for many years before; amongst which evidences the innocency of (Mrs. *Levingstone*) formerly by the confederates maliciously aspersed and bespattered, was now fully vindicated, to their great astonishment, trouble, and disgrace.

Then the Court proceeded to the other Indictment, which was for bewitching one *Christopher Wilson* (who doth not himself complain of any such thing, but the Confederates only:) and the only materiall evidence that then was against her, was one *Margaret Austin* (who had formerly been a wandering person, but was in charity taken up, relieved, and kept, by the said *Jone Peterson*, until shee perceived that the said *Austin* had purloined some of her goods out of her house,) and two Witnesses more; the substance of whose Testimony was as followeth. That the said *Wilson*, having been a long time sick, and hearing that the said *Peterson* had done good to many, sent for her to come to him, who accordingly did: and administred meanes for his Recovery, which at first was conceived to do him good; But he afterwards relapsed, and the reason that was urged to induce the Court and Iury to believe that he was Bewitched, was, that dureing his sickness, shee sent to him for monyes for her Phisick; to whom Answer was returned that he could then send her none. Whereupon it was then deposed, that shee did reply, that he had better have sent her monies, for he should be 10 times worse then ever was; And that afterwards he became very ill again, and remained languishing. Many other witnesses were produced, but could only swear to generallities, hear-says, and most absurd

ſurd and rediculous impertinences: then being by the Court demanded what ſhe could ſay for her ſelfe? ſhe deſired that ſuch Witneſſes as ſhe had then there preſent, might be called (ſome of which durſt not appeare becauſe that the ſaid Mr. *Waterton*, (as the witneſſes them ſelves, doe and will affirme) had threatned to ſend them to *Newgate*, if they did appeare.) Whereupon ſeverall witneſſes were called, and being demanded what they could ſay for the Priſoner, they began to tell, that they had knowne her a long time, and that ſhe had done many Cures, and much good amongſt the Neighboures, but never knew that ſhe did any ill; But the Officers of the Court interrupted them. ſaying (in a taunting manner *Jare you for a Witch? and is this all you can ſay?* and ſo turned ſeverall of them away before they could be further heard. Then one came to the Court (a Stranger to the priſoner) and offered to depoſe, that one in black, called *Thomas Southwick* (knowne to be ſervant to *Thomas Cromton* another of the confederats) ſtood in the Seſſions yard, offering money to ſtrangers there, to come in and ſwear) that the ſaid *Peterſon* was a Wtich, and amongſt the reſt offered to give her mony if ſhe would doe the ſame, but he being called for, could not be had, nor would appeare, although Colonell *Okey*, and ſome other Juſtices upon the Bench, deſired the Recorder to take notice of it, and to give Order that the ſaid *Thomas Southwick* might be brought into Court. Whereupon the Jury went forth, and brought in their verdicts, that the ſaid *Peterſon* was not guilty upon the firſt Indictment of bewiching the Lady *Powell* to death; But found her guilty upon the ſecond, for which ſhe was then caſt, and the next day condemned to dye as a witch, And after that the ſaid confederates and their agents went very often to her promiſing her a Repreive or Pardon if ſhe would confeſſe

that

that Mrs. *Levingſtone* had Imployed her to make away the life of the Lady *Powell*, to which ſhe replyed ſhe could not, becauſe it was altogether falſe. But one of the ſaid confederates urging her againe to ſay ſomething againſt Mrs. *Levingſtone*, ſhe told him he was a rogue, and gave him a blow on the face, which made his noſe bleed: Where it is to be noted, that what for love of money they could not tempt her to, they reſolved at laſt for love of her life to force her to, by neceſſitating her either unjuſtly to confeſſe a notorious falſehood againſt the ſaid Mrs. *Levingſtone* or elſe to dye without mercy or Repreive, which otherwiſe was proffered her by the ſaid Confederates, to make her unjuſt in doing the ſame.

On the 12 day the ſaid *Jone Peterſon* (being brought to the place of Execution) was by the Ordinary nine or ten times earneſtly preſſed to confeſſe ſomething againſt the ſaid Mrs. *Levingſtone*: Whereupon the Executioner told the Ordinary, he might be aſhamed to trouble a dying woman ſo much, to which he replyed, he was commanded ſo to doe, and durſt doe no otherwiſe And afterwards the ſaid Ordinary ſtill inſiſting in his diſcourſe, and very often preſſing the ſaid *Peterſon* to confeſſe and diſcharge her conſcience before God and the world; ſhe anſwered that ſhe had already confeſſed before the Bench, all ſhe had to confeſſe; that ſhe had made her peace with God; and therefore deſired to dye in quiet, for now ſhe was to appeare before God who preſently would Judge her, and that God was witnes, that ſhe dyed Innocently, and was in no wiſe guilty of what was laid to her charge, and that ſhe hoped he would freely forgive her all her ſins, and to this effect ſhe ſtill replyed to his frequent importunities: And having gone to prayers, ſhe ſhewed her ſelfe very attentive and penitent, and after Prayer called to ſing the 25th Pſalm, which ſhe performed very Chriſtianly and cheerfully, and ſo died, &c.

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The Copy of a Certificate under the hands of ſeverall Doctors of Phiſicke & Chirurgions concerning the death of the Lady Powell.

October the 8. 1651.

In the Body of the Lady *Powell*, who dyed the ſeventh of this inſtant, was obſerved.

The Skin univerſally diſcovered Yellow.

The Belly ſwolne very much, the Thighs alſo and Legs.

The Cavity of the Abdomen *poſſeſſed with yellowiſh obſcure water, the quantity whereof not much above one Gallon and an half.*

The Stomack and Guts not diſſafected, nor the Kidnies.

The Pancreas canceorus *in part, ſome part being degenerated into a feculent matter; like* Amurca *or dregs of oyle, yet contained in a* Ciſte.

The Liver larger then it ought, black; of an unequal ſchirrous or rather Cancerous *ſubſtance,* exangues.

The Spleen joyned with the left part of the hollow of the liver, as if they were one body, very black, and hard outwardly, inwardly rotten.

The Gall large and full, but of a deeper Yellow, inclined to red and black matter.

In

In the cavity of the Breast or Thorax water of the same substance and colour neer a Gallon.

The Lungs something thicker and more discoloured then usual.

The heart well.

The Bones very easily broken.

Colladon.
George Bate.
Goddard.
George Chabrey.
} Phisitians.

Charles Stamford
Thomas Page.
} Chirurgians.

Besides the Apothecaries, and several other persons, who testified the same And are still ready to do the like.

Coll. Okey, *Coll.* Berkstead, *and divers other Justices of the Peace, both at Hixes hall, and at the old Baley, did declare themselves that they were not satisfied either with the proceedings, or proof against this Peterson, that she was guilty of witchcraft, but that there was a design in it, relating to the prejudice of Mrs.* Levingstone, *which they are ready to testifie to the Parliament when they shall be required thereunto.*

FINIS.